

## Mathematics and Draw Poker

The Stranger's Play Upsets Old Man Greenhut's Theories.

(New York Sun.)

"I reckon there ain't nothin' under the blue calico o' heaven what's talked about more'n draw poker is," said old man Greenhut as he stood leaning on his bar. No one, excepting the usual group of regular frequenters, was in the saloon, and none of them was sufficiently thirsty to spend his own money. Floods had interrupted travel by rail, and even the boat service was irregular, so the Arkansas City was thrown upon its own resources for amusement, sustenance and instruction.

All three were usually to be had in old man Greenhut's saloon, but this evening nothing but instruction seemed to be forthcoming.

"Them that stands ready for 't' explain the mysteries o' that there game," he continued, "is mostly the kind that don't rightly know the difference between a busted flush and a blue chip. How 'tis 't a man reckons himself fitted for to discourse onto a abstruse subject like draw poker, just 'cause he's played penny ante once or twice, beats me, it sure do."

"There was a gazabo with glasses on come in here one night. He set in fr a spell with you uns in the back room. There was a game on with two producers I'm down the river, an' he looked like he might be another, so I sold him chips an' he took a hand fr about four deals."

"Then he quit. Likely som o' you uns c'n remember it. He come out to me an' says he reckons he'll cash in. 'I like draw poker,' he says to me, confidential like, 'but I'm all the time losin' more'n I c'n afford. I've lost \$3 tonight, an' I've got confused already on my figgerin'." The science o' the game, he says, 'is what I love dearly, an' I've got a good head for figures, too, but them higher mathematics is 'most too much fr me, sometimes.'"

"Them higher mathematics is sure confusin' if you ain't used to 'em," I says. "The way we play, a straight flush beats anythin', but one o' them mathematics, they tell me, beats a straight flush."

"He looked at me fr a minute, like the way I'd looked at him, an' then he laughed. 'That's funny,' he says, 'but mathematics ain't a hand. It's the science o' figgers.'"

"So I laughed, too, an' I says: 'O' course I knowed that. I thought you figgerin' on how to beat me, but I reckon 't was so confusin' to your poor head.'"

"Then he looked thoughtful, an' he says: 'No, there can't nothin' beat a straight flush, 'thouten it's a higher one. But figgerin' on your hand an' the other feller's is mathematics, an' when you get over a million, that's higher mathematics. Now, there's more two millions an' a half o' hands in a poker deck, an' you do get confused playin' scientific.'"

"Then I knowed, o' course, 't he was bughouse, bein' there ain't but fifty-two cards into a deck, so I says: 'Well, I never counted 'em, but I reckon there must be that many. But what's that got to do with it? A man on'y has to play one on 'em to count.' "That's the trouble with you players what don't study the higher mathematics," he says, kind o' toptical. "You look at your own cards an' you don't figger the averages on them two an' a half millions so's for to see what 'other man has. Stands to reason he must have somepin', an' when you get countin' up to find out which one o' them two an' a half millions 'tis he really does have it gets some confusin'." Then when you begins reck'nin' the odds in the bettin' an' multiplies that by two mill—

"Hold on, there!" I says, kind enough but to'fable severe. "What you want to do is to stop drinkin' an' go home an' go to bed fr about a week. 'Pears like the loss o' that eight dollars 's gone to your head. It's dead ag'in the house rules, I says, 'for to give a man back any money, but if you was to take a solemn affidavit 't you wouldn't never talk about draw poker no more, I don't know but what I might consider the question o' givin' a rebate on them eight dollars.'"

"Well, he drawed himself up in the air about four feet an' looked like he was insulted, but he didn't say nothin' an' walked out o' the house."

"There was a cuss name o' Red Ritter, come to Little Rock when I was runnin' a place up there, 't was said to be one o' the highest eddicated men in Arkansas. 'Pears he'd spent two year in a college up north somewheres 'n found out how to read Latin like it was plain United States. He had money an' didn't need for to did nothin' in the way o' business, but he'd got this craze fr leavin' an' he entered a law office fr to study some more."

"Just then the toot-toot of a boat's whistle sounded on the river, and Joe Bassett got up and yawned mightily. "I reckon mebbe I might go bughouse my own self if I was to listen to this long. I'm goin' out on the levee. If there's any strangers aboard that there boat there might be things a-diddin'."

"Me, too," said Sam Pearsall, and the two went out into the night.

Old man Greenhut smoked on in silence, not offering to continue his story until Ten Spot Ike spoke up. He with Winterbottom and Blaisdell remained with the old man.

"I reckon I'd like to hear some more," he said, and the others said they would too. So Greenhut continued. "Pears this here Red Ritter sort o' plumed himself on doin' things stujous, so when he was roped into a poker game up to the hotel an' lost about \$400, he went away an' studied over it a spell, an' come to the conclusion there must be some way o' beatin' the game if he c'd on'y find out what 'twas. So he sent up no'th an' bought a book some feller had wrote about poker."

"Then he set up nights readin' this book over an' over, till he come to a idee. 'Pears the book said you'd get four of a kind once in 4,165 hands, an' when Red Ritter came across that, he says to himself here was where he c'd beat the game."

"He'd set all day, dealin' hisself poker hands. Then, if he didn't strike fours inside o' 4,100 deals, he'd set into a game that night, reasonin' as how he'd sure get as many as sixty-five more hands in the game, an' no one on 'em must be fours. Then if he'd wait till he got 'em, he'd get a play. 'Pears like he reckoned four of a kind was good enough to bet on, but he was frightened o' small hands."

"Bein' as 'twas printed into a book, o' course the figgers was right, but 'peared like the more Red Ritter worked at it, the more it didn't come out like the book said. Sometimes he'd get fours the first fifteen minutes he was dealin' to himself, but more times he'd work all day an' not get 'em. Then, o' course, he'd know he'd ought fer to get 'em that night, an' he'd set in, but there'd be some hitch about it, an' he'd lose more'n he win for a hull month. Then somepin' give way inside o' his head, an' they sent him—"

On the moment, the door opened and Joe Bassett and Sam Pearsall entered with two strangers. Bassett invited everybody to drink, so old man Greenhut went behind the bar to attend to business.

One of the strangers was unmistakably a planter, but the other was a portly gentleman, whose appearance was puzzling. He was foppish in his dress and so well groomed as to suggest that he might be a professional gambler, but the expanse of white linen disclosed by his low cut vest was not wide enough, and the diamonds in his shirt were not large enough to be conclusive evidence. He introduced himself as Mr. Hobert, a banker from Chicago, and the planter said his name was Titcomb.

"I like draw poker," said Mr. Hobert, after a game had been proposed and they were all, excepting old man Greenhut, seated at the table. "I like draw poker for the opportunity it gives a man to do some scientific calculation. What makes it fascinating to me is to observe how accurately the mathematics work out."

Old man Greenhut's eyes gleamed and his fingers twitched when he heard this, but he said nothing. Ten Spot Ike, however, seemed anxious to hear more. "How do you reckon them mathematics works out?" he asked. "We uns reckons we plays some skillful, but we don't take much stock into the mathematics."

They had just received hands in the first deal, Hobert having anted one dollar calls two, and as they had been talking, Winterbottom, Pearsall and Ten Spot Ike had come in, Blaisdell and Titcomb had dropped and Bassett, the dealer, had come in.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Hobert. "You'll observe that there is \$9 in the pot now, and it only costs me one to draw cards, so I get 9 to 1 in the betting. Now the chances of filling a four flush are 9 to 47, so it's a good bet for me to come in, assuming that a flush will win. More than likely it will, so I come in," and he put in a dollar and called for one card.

Winterbottom called for three and caught a third king. Pearsall took three, but failed to better. Ten Spot Ike took one to a straight and also missed, while Bassett took one to queens up without improving.

Winterbottom bet \$5. Pearsall and Ten Spot Ike dropped. Bassett stayed. "Now," said Hobert, "you will observe that it is no longer a question of filling a flush or not filling it, but whether a flush is worth backing against a three card draw and a one card draw. More than likely it's good against the one, and there's a fair chance against the other, so I raise it \$10, which is not inordinate considering the size of the pot."

Winterbottom studied a bit before playing. Finally, however, he made good, whereupon Bassett dropped, and Hobert was forced to show down. He had three aces, and of course took the pot.

"You see," he said, laughing, "that it was not a flush I was drawing to, but I gave you the mathematics of the play

in case I had been trying for a flush." The others did not laugh, though Winterbottom thought he detected a smile on Titcomb's face and thereupon prepared himself for extra watchfulness.

Hobert dealt next, and while he was shuffling he went on talking. "Of course, everybody knows the average hand is a small pair, and if a player has better than that—"

"Say, stranger," said Joe Bassett abruptly, "I don't want to cash in this early in the game, 'thouten it's really needful for to do it, an' I ain't 'xactly what you'd call nervous, but if you was to give up that there preachin' about mathematics an' averages I'd c'n'dler it a favor. I don't wish for to get nutty afore my time."

"Oh, very well," said Mr. Hobert, and he took the next pot. When Winterbottom dealt he stayed out, but on Pearsall's deal he won again. Then he stayed out until it came Titcomb's ags, he stayed. The others all stayed excepting Pearsall and Blaisdell, and Bassett raised it \$5, whereupon Hobert promptly made it \$10 more.

"There's a very pretty explanation to be made of the science of that play, when you figure the proportion between the size of the pot and the size of the bet, but as long as you're not interested in mathematics I'll cut that out."

The others were impressed, and they dropped out up to Titcomb. He made it \$10 more, and Bassett looked at his hand again. He was about to put his money in, when Jake Winterbottom spoke up.

"Looks like there was a fair openin' fr some whipsawin' just about now," he said dryly, and Bassett hesitated. Then he threw down his cards.

Titcomb picked up the deck to serve the draw, but, pausing a moment, he said with a soft drawl: "Mebbe the gentleman will speak a lectie more plain next time. 'Pears like he said some too much or not enough. If he was just puttin' up a ante, I'll come in, but if he was chippin' I raise him, an' mebbe he'd better throw down his cyards."

"Sposin' you call it on'y just a ante," said Winterbottom coolly, but reaching for his gun as he spoke—a motion that was so plain that Hobert and Titcomb both reached for their at the same moment.

Just then, however, old man Greenhut burst into the room brandishing his bungstarter. "I knowed there was somepin' wrong!" he shouted, "when this here yap begin talkin' mathematics, an' here's George Miller just come in as knowed him at sight. Joe Bassett, there's a reward of \$2,000 fr the capture o' that man, Dick Taylor (pointing at Hobert), an' you're the sheriff. I call on you for to arrest him, an' I'll commit him to jail."

There was a brief struggle, for Taylor and his pal were both desperate, but the odds were too great and they were quickly secured.

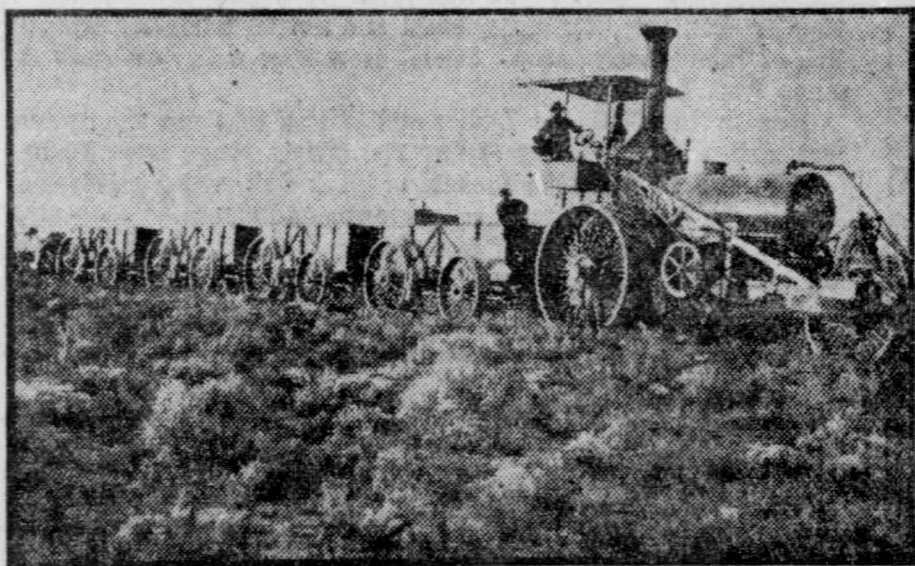
"You didn't tell us what became o' Red Ritter," said Ten Spot Ike after the excitement had subsided.

"Oh, they sent him to th' insane asylum," said old man Greenhut, "an' they made him superintendent. I reckon it must 'a' been because there wasn't nobody else there as crazy as he was."

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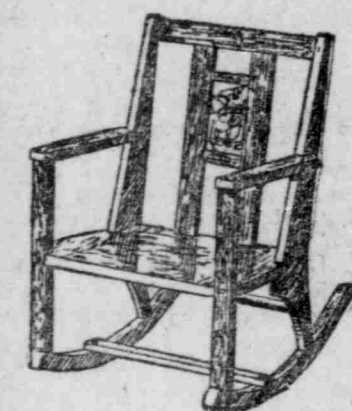


## FREED'S Annual Spring Sale

OUR STORE WAS CROWDED ALL LAST WEEK AND AT TIMES IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO TAKE CARE OF OUR CUSTOMERS. IN VIEW OF THESE FACTS FREED'S HAVE DECIDED TO CONTINUE THEIR ANNUAL SPRING SALE **ONE MORE WEEK.**

REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE NOT PICKED OUT A FEW ARTICLES FOR THIS SALE, BUT EVERY PIECE OF GOODS IN OUR IMMENSE STOCK HAS BEEN REDUCED. BELOW ARE A FEW ARTICLES THAT SHOW HOW THE PRICE HAS BEEN CUT FOR THIS SALE.

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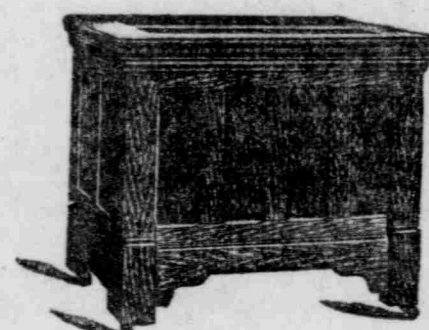
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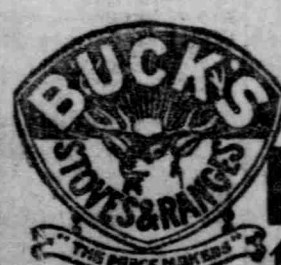
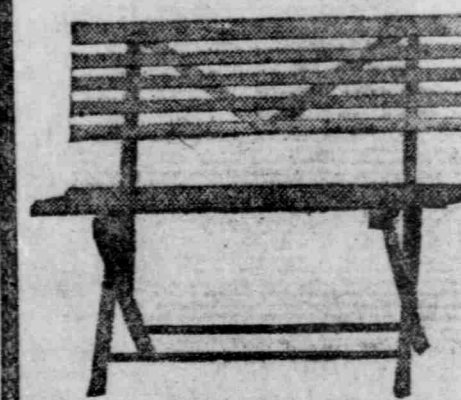
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